



Town of Arlington, Massachusetts
730 Massachusetts Ave., Arlington, MA 02476
Phone: 781-316-3000

webmaster@town.arlington.ma.us

School Committee Minutes 05/12/2009

Approved by School Committee June 2, 2009

**THE ARLINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, MAY 12, 2009
7:30 P.M.**

Present: Joe Curran, Chair, Leba Heigham
Joe Curro, Secretary Cindy Starks
Ronald Spangler Jeff Thielman

Interim Superintendent: Kathleen Bodie arrived at 8:45 p.m.
Chief Financial Officer: Sue Mazarella
Special Education Director: Mark Ryder
Student Reps: Lauren Adleman

Mr. Curran exited the meeting at 8:29 p.m. and returned at 8:31 p.m.
Mr. Curran exited the meeting at 8:55 pm. and returned at 9:00 p.m.
Mr. Curro exited the meeting at 9:03 p.m. and returned at 9:05 p.m.
Student rep Lauren Adleman exited meeting at 9:19 p.m.

Absent: Denise Burns, Vice Chair

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Juli Brazile expressed appreciation to the School Committee for keeping information on the budget flowing to the public.

Barbara Goodman stated a desire to understand the impact of the budget and the impact of the \$400,000 savings from Special Education.

Lauren Adelman spoke of the success of all the student trips abroad and recommends that Arlington continues to offer student trips.

VOTE POLICY JFBB-SCHOOL CHOICE

Mr. Curro questioned whether the existing policy required a public hearing before the annual vote that it calls for. Mr. Thielman and Ms. Heigham interpreted the policy as requiring a hearing only if we were to decide to accept non-resident school choice students.

Mr. Thielman moved that the school district not admit non-resident students under the terms and conditions of the Inter-district School Choice Law (M.G.L. 76:12.), seconded by Ms. Heigham.

Vote 6:0

Dr. Spangler moved to refer policy JFBB to Policy and Procedures for language clarification, seconded by Mr. Curro.

Vote 6:0

APPROVAL OF JOB DESCRIPTION - Middle School Social Worker

Ms. Mazzarella asked the committee for approval of the Middle School Social Worker position, noting that this Social Worker is not part of Special Education, and that this position would be cost neutral for the district.

Ms. Heigham moved to approve the job description for the Middle School Social Worker FTE 1.0, seconded by Mr. Thielman.

Vote 6:0

APPROVAL OF STUDENT TRAVEL

Mr. Thielman moved to approve the Arlington High School Science and Engineering Club to travel to Virginia to participate in the National Rocketry Competition from May 15 - 17th, 2009, directed by Mr. Duranceau, seconded by Ms. Heigham.

Vote 6:0

It was noted that all travel expenses are the responsibility of the student.

BUDGET FY 10 DISCUSSIONS

Ms. Mazzarella had presented the FY 10 Proposed Budget Impact and Clarification report dated as May 8, 2009 and noted this has been posted to the website and that all the tiers were the recommendation of the administrative team.

Ms. Mazzarella had updated the committee on the current economic situation in the state and stressed that the budget continues to be a moving target. Ms. Mazzarella reported that after the administrative team met with Kathy Bodie they recommended using the entire Stimulus money of \$914,000 and not keeping a reserve of \$500,000 as the committee had previously voted and approved. Tier 1 has remained the same and Tier 2 deductions actually balance the budget as it stands now, with Tier 3 impacting many elementary staff. Sue stressed that all Administrators will receive zero percent increase for FY 10 and that union contracts for FY 10 will be adhered to as the contract states.

The committee continued to talk about the budget. Class sizes at each of the schools were one of the main focuses of the discussion, as well as energy costs to the schools and the work of a house dean versus an assistant principal.

Mr. Curro requested a grid projecting enrollments and class sizes for all schools.

Ms. Starks inquired about the actual vs. budgeted amount of money being spent on professional development for teachers, as well as the large energy costs incurred by the district.

Mr. Thielman asked for a breakdown of the professional development expenditures.

At Mr. Thielman's request, the Chair invited Mr. Skidmore to the table to explain to the committee the student-teacher ratio for each of the core subjects at Arlington High School and to explain the House Dean cut versus giving up a classroom teacher. Mr. Skidmore stated that a .5 Assistant Principal and .5 House Dean will support the students at Arlington High School. The Assistant Principal will support him with MCAS duties and evaluations on teachers and the House Dean would be responsible with students' conduct. Dr. Wallis Raemer was also brought to the table to explain the impact of the retiring reading coach, which position it is proposed to replace with a .5 elementary reading teacher.

Dr. Spangler summarized the difficulty of this year's budget and inquired as to the obligation of notices to the staff and administration as a result of reductions. Ms. Mazzarella suggested that the committee vote the budget June 9, 2009 before the June 15, 2009 notification deadline of staff reductions.

Dr. Spangler suggested a second Public Hearing before the budget is voted and recommended that the administration and the community should keep in mind that this could all change again.

Dr. Spangler questioned the impact if the circuit breaker percentage drops, and Ms. Starks reported that when at the State House, several state officials offered their best guess as a 55 % reimbursement rate, instead of 65% on the circuit breaker. Dr. Spangler applauded the administrators for not taking a 1.5% raise. When asked by Dr. Spangler about the clerical unit, Ms. Mazzarella summarized the letter emailed to the clerical staff asking for members to volunteer to restructure their hours if approved by their supervisors.

Ms. Heigham had a few questions on tier lines and requested class size breakdown and cost breakdown on having a

full day versus half-day kindergarten classes.

Point of Information from Dr. Spangler stated that Arlington Public Schools are below average with our kindergarten fees and that he will provide some old data on fees to the committee.

Ms. Heigham had reviewed Dr. Spangler's July 29, 2009 Budget Subcommittee report and requested revised figures and additional details on kindergarten supplies.

Mr. Curro asked Ms. Mazzarella about the four major offsets to the budget. Ms. Mazzarella was confident that the Foreign Exchange students' visa fees, the LABBB money that is due to us, and the Special Education initiatives will bring in the amounts budgeted for, but that Custodial streamlining will be difficult.

Ms. Mazzarella recapped the committee's request:

§ Class size projections of enrollment for next year at each of the schools and to show class size projections with the impact of cuts

§ A cost breakdown of full day kindergarten versus half day kindergarten and a request of surrounding communities fees for kindergarten,

§ To have professional development broken down

§ A listing of each staff member's professional memberships.

Dr. Spangler moved that the School Committee hold a second Public Hearing on the FY 10 Budget at 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, May 26, 2009, seconded by Ms. Heigham.

Vote 5:0 (Mr. Curran had exited the room)

The discussion continued on the impact of losing teachers and having students sitting in Old Hall or possibly bringing back senior privileges of an open campus. It was suggested to add senior privileges as an agenda item for further discussion.

SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

Dr. Kathleen Bodie reported on the progress of Arlington High School Special Education students with IEP's and how they continue to improve their MCAS scores. Dr. Bodie announced the 2009 Math Fair Winners from the middle school and high school; discussed the Music Department Pop Concert; noted that MCAS exams will be held in the coming week; and announced that notices on Swine Flu are currently on the School Department website.

ROUNDTABLE

POLICY BDEA SCHOOL COMMITTEE SUBCOMMITTEES Assignments 2009 - 2010

Mr. Curro moved to approve the 2009 -2010 School Committee Five Standing Committees only, seconded by Ms. Heigham.

Vote 6:0

ARLINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE Subcommittees 2009-2010

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|---|--|
| Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment | CHAIR: Ron Spangler |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Special Education• Minuteman Tech• Discussion about Science Issues K-12• MCAS• Professional Development | Member: Jeff Thielman Member: Leba Heigham |
| Community Relations | CHAIR: Cindy Starks |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Athletics• After School Programs• Website/Use of technology in schools• Redistricting | Member: Joe Curro Member: Leba Heigham |

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|--|---|
| Budget | CHAIR: Joe Curro |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Monitor impact of fee increases · Explore ways to increase revenue to the school department · In depth analysis of selected components of the budget | Member: Cindy Starks Member: Ron Spangler |
| Policies and Procedures | CHAIR: Denise Burns |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Continued review of policies · Review policies referred to the subcommittee | Member: Joe Curro Member: Jeff Thielman |
| District Accountability | CHAIR: Leba Heigham |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Coordinate the evaluation/accountability process for the 2009-2010 school year. · Develop the accountability grid and process for 2009-2010 | Member: Ron Spangler Member: Cindy Starks |

Mr. Curro made note of many letters received by the School Committee from members of the Thompson community, and he asked the Chair to consider keeping continuity in three of the latter's proposed assignments: designee to School Facility Working Group; designee to the Permanent Town Building Committee; and membership of the Superintendent Search Process Subcommittee.

After discussion on the School Committee Assignments and Appointments for 2009 - 2010, it was noted by Mr. Curran that he would come back to the committee at the next meeting with new recommendations on the designee to the Permanent Town Building Committee and the Superintendent Search Process Subcommittee. Mr. Curran stated he will remain on the School Facility Working Group and will assign a designee if he is unable to attend, not necessarily someone from the School Committee. Mr. Curran said that he would check again with Town Counsel and the Town Clerk regarding his appointments. It was noted by Mr. Curro that – per policy -- these assignments will need the approval of the School Committee.

Mr. Curro moved to approve all 2009 - 2010 School Committee Assignments and Appointments except designee to the School Facilities Working Group, designee to the Permanent Town Building Committee, and membership of the Superintendent Search Process Subcommittee, seconded by Ms. Heigham.

Vote 6:0

Mr. Thielman moved to extend the Superintendent Search Process Subcommittee that was established last year and ensure that the committee is charged with the purpose of hiring a new superintendent, to make decisions, and establish a course of action after June 30, 2010, seconded by Mr. Curro.

Vote 6:0

Ms. Heigham stressed that the authorization of the Superintendent Search Process Subcommittee was extended only, with no final determination as to its members.

Mr. Thielman reported on the MASC Day on the Hill, May 7, 2009

Mr. Curro and Ms. Heigham have met with the AEA Union to continue with the negotiations process.

Mr. Curro reported on progress in selecting a consultant to perform a highest and best use analysis of the Crosby and Parmenter schools. He also reported on a tea organized by the Superintendent's Diversity Advisory Committee, in order to give job seekers an overview of Arlington; he singled out METCO Director Steve Pereira for special praise.

Mr. Curro also recommended that the Community Relations Subcommittee meet and prepare a proposal to have the School Committee meet at the District's various schools.

Dr. Spangler reported that the School Facilities Working Group has drafted a report on this year's events and will

report to Town Meeting. Ron noted that the SFWG had prepared the Facility Review Assessment report that was provided to all School Committee members in their packets. The Permanent Town Building Committee has met and will continue to discuss the next steps on school buildings.

Ms. Starks reported that she had met with Dr. Bodie and Ms. Mazzarella, as well as the three members writing a warrant article regarding fees, and determined a warrant article was not needed. Cindy reported that she gave her testimony at the State House to the Joint Committee on Municipalities and Regional Government on May 12, 2009; that she attended MASC Day on the Hill; and noted the great experience of meeting up with the exchange students from Japan; Ms. Starks stated that she looks forward to traveling to Japan herself this summer.

SECRETARY REPORT

Mr. Curro acknowledged all correspondence that was received by the committee: concerned parent about ACE funding; Kim Holt letter regarding the possibility of Model U.N. participants appearing before the School Committee; Ottoson Middle School's annual Memorial Day Program on May 22, 2009; update from Bob Bartholomew on Physical Education at the Ottoson; announcement of 2009 Youth Service Award given by the Boys and Girls Club to Theo Orfanos and Amanda Spero; OMS weekly updates from April 29 and May 4, 2009; announcement of Association of Teachers of Mathematics in Massachusetts award to Jeff Lim; METCO Legislative Alert, May 1, 2009; Hardy Retirement Party notice; AHS update from May 10, 2009; Alan Hovhaness Commemorative Committee concert on May 17, 2009; community member letters received by the School Committee in regards to Permanent Town Building Committee and School Facilities Working Group appointments; invitation to Peirce Poetry Slam Jam on May 15, 2009; letter from Dr. Bodie on School Nurse Recognition Day, May 6, 2009; and Onsite Insight Preliminary Report on Thompson Elementary School dated May 1, 2009. Mr. Curran reported on the Soap Box Derby scheduled for June 2009.

CONSENT AGENDA all items listed with an asterisk (*) are considered to be routine and will be enacted by one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a member of the committee so request, in which event the item will be considered in its normal sequence.

***Approval of Warrant # 09153 in the amount of \$341,072.68 dated April 28, 2009**

Ms. Heigham moved to approve the CONSENT AGENDA as presented, seconded by Mr. Curro.
Vote 6:0

EXECUTIVE SESSION

10:06 - 10:59 p.m.

On a motion by Mr. Curro it was moved to enter into EXECUTIVE SESSION at 10:06 p.m. to conduct strategy sessions with respect to collective bargaining or litigation. Collective bargaining may be conducted. To conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with non-union personnel, and to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with non-union personnel only to exit out of Executive Session to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Heigham.

Roll Call: Mr. Thielman Yes, Ms. Heigham Yes, Mr. Curro Yes, Mr. Curran Yes, Dr. Spangler Yes, and Ms. Starks Yes.

Vote 6:0 unanimous

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Curro moved to adjourn at 10:59 p.m., seconded by Ms. Starks.
Vote 6:0 unanimous

Review of draft minutes of regular meeting 3/31/2009, 4/14/2009 and 4/28/2009 and 4/14/09 Orientation meeting

Respectfully submitted by
Karen Fitzgerald
Administrative Assistant
Arlington School Committee/JC